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NSC BRIEFING

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13 April 1960

BACKGROUND

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- I. Position of Trujillo dictatorship continues to weaken--is now regarded as precarious.
  - A. Wholesale arrests in January and on a reduced scale in February and March touched almost every prominent Dominican family.
    1. This drastic action broke up extensive revolutionary conspiracy plotting to get rid of Trujillo.
    2. However, plotting continues and opposition to Trujillo steadily spreading.
    3. Dissidents much harder to cow after January arrests since they realize for the first time how numerous they are.
    4. Indications are that further attempts will be made by dissidents to kill or oust the dictator.
    5. Among the dissidents there is a pro-Castro faction, of unknown strength, that becomes larger as hopes for US intervention against Trujillo fade.
- II. Trujillo's relations with Catholic Church have deteriorated almost to final breaking point since end of January when all six Dominican bishops issued strong pastoral letter condemning violation human rights and expressed solidarity with families of those arrested.
- III. Economic situation is worsening. Business is stagnant, increasing numbers of people are suffering economic hardship, and most international financial sources are denying loans to government.

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- A. New loan for about \$8 million or rescheduling of payments for an old loan of \$10 - 20 million reportedly made last September may have been granted to the Dominican government last month by Bank of Nova Scotia.
  - 1. Necessity to borrow during present period when income (mainly sugar) at seasonal peak is bad economic omen for rest of 1960.
- B. US Embassy has confirmation that Trujillo family has "milked" assets of the state Reserve Bank.
  - 1. Dictator's son "Ramfis" and daughter Angelita reportedly removed \$46,000,000 possibly in preparation for an early exile.
  - 2. "Ramfis" went to Switzerland last January to "prepare" for his family's removal to that country.

IV. Generalissimo does not realize how bad his position is.

- A. He personally does not appear to anticipate his fall, nor to be planning a voluntary flight into exile.
- B. "Ramfis" recently commented privately that his father is unable to understand the situation and refuses to listen to those who advise him to relax controls.
- C. An old friend of Trujillo sees the dictator as "mentally trapped" by advisers who want to keep their positions of power.
- D. Trujillo's most recent maneuver to establish spurious opposition parties and hold mock elections for purposes of satisfying commitments made to Senator Smathers is further proof of his unrealistic attitude.

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V. Military cooperation will be necessary to oust Trujillo.

The military--the bulwark of Trujillo's power--has been repelled by excesses going on in Cuba and is probably coming to believe it must act against Trujillo before radical elements are in position to gain control.

VI. If Trujillo does fall soon:

- A. It will probably be because--at the crucial moment in the deterioration of Trujillo's power --a military junta told him to depart before the situation gets out of hand.
- B. Should military junta with middle class civilian and possible ecclesiastical participation take over, it probably would have a fair chance of maintaining order if it promises elections and democratic government.
- C. Junta would have to cope with deteriorating economic situation, the competing appeals of Castro-backed and other returning exile leaders, and the likely emergence sooner or later, of divisions within its own ranks.
- D. Unless a moderate Dominican government received prompt support from sympathetic governments of an undoubted liberal character--Venezuela for instance--Castro might emerge as the ultimate victor.
- E. Decline of US influence, stemming from considerable resentment of past support for Trujillo and failure to intervene against the dictatorship, is probable.

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